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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 WELLINGTON 000028

SIPDIS

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SINGAPORE FOR TSA
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR HARRIS AND WILLIAMS,
JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 12, 2005

REF: SINGAPORE 3629

1. (SBU) Embassy welcomes and grants country clearance to Transportation Security Administration Officials Francis E. Harris and Lisa A. Williams, to travel to Rarotonga, Cook Islands from January 29 - February 5, 2005, and Auckland, New Zealand from February 5 - 12, 2005. The purpose of this visit is to conduct airport assessments in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organization's standards and recommended practices, and to inspect the air carriers subject to U.S. regulations.

2. (U) Embassy will make hotel reservations and schedule meetings, as requested. All relevant information will be sent via email to Singapore and Sydney contacts.

3. (SBU) Embassy point of contact is Economic Officer Joy Yamamoto. Contact details are as follows:

Office: 644-462-6182
Fax: 644-472-3537
Cell: 027-446-4467
E-mail: YamamotoJO@state.gov

NEW ZEALAND

4. (SBU) All TDY visitors to Embassy Wellington are required to report to the Regional Security Office for a security briefing if they have not completed an approved overseas personal security training course.

5. (U) Visitors should use local taxi service, which is generally safe, reliable and frequent. Taxi fare from the airport to downtown Auckland hotels is approximately NZD60.00.

6. (U) Travelers can exchange currency at the airport upon arrival and ATM machines are readily available throughout New Zealand. Check cashing privileges at the Embassy are limited to traveler's checks only up to USD 300.00 daily. Personal checks will not be accepted.

7. (SBU) Biosecurity Fines:

The Government of New Zealand instituted fines for non-declared biosecurity hazards on travelers entering New Zealand with undeclared plant, animal or food material. Travelers found carrying these undeclared items will be immediately fined NZD200.00 (USD150.00). Biosecurity is a serious issue in New Zealand and fines will be administered immediately and without warnings.

8. (SBU) Security Information:

a. (SBU) All U.S. citizen personnel serving under the Chief of Mission authority in a temporary status of 30 days or more must complete appropriate overseas personal security training prior to travel (04 State 66580). Employees who have completed the Security Overseas Seminar course at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) after June 1, 2000, meet this requirement. All other TDY personnel must either (1) complete the approved seminar at FSI entitled "Serving Abroad for Families and Employees" (SAFE), or (2) have their agency certify to the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security that the employee has undergone equivalent security training. The contact for this training is Assistant Director for Training at (703) 205-2617. Country clearance will not be granted for any traveler with planned TDY in excess of 30 days if this information is not stated/certified. POC for additional information is RSO Wellington.

b. (SBU) The U.S. Mission in New Zealand currently rates the threat from transnational and indigenous terrorism as low. There are no terrorist groups or support groups believed to be operating in New Zealand at this time. In light of the worldwide security alert all visitors should heighten their security awareness and report any unusual

incidents to the Regional Security Officer.

c. (SBU) Anonymous telephonic threats and obscure threat mail have occasionally targeted U.S. diplomatic missions in New Zealand. In response to U.S. policies and actions, various groups in New Zealand have demonstrated occasionally at the Embassy in Wellington and at the Consulate in Auckland. These demonstrations are usually small and are peacefully conducted. During these demonstrations, the host country police and protective services normally provide adequate protection to the Embassy and Consulate.

d. (SBU) New Zealand is considered a medium threat crime environment. As such, Wellington and Auckland have experienced an increase in violent and petty crimes, but they are usually non-confrontational in nature. However, home invasion robberies and assaults, once very rare, are becoming more frequent. Burglaries and thefts occur countrywide but primarily in the large cities of Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, and visitors should be especially aware that street crime, such as scams and pickpockets, is a daily occurrence in these cities. Common sense precautions should be taken, especially at night, to avoid becoming a target of opportunity.

e. (SBU) Generally, New Zealand does not play a significant role in the world drug situation; however, evidence indicates that New Zealand has been utilized as a transit point for shipments of Ecstasy, Heroin and Cocaine to Australia. The most abused drugs in New Zealand are locally produced methamphetamine and cannabis. There have been increased amounts of lab seizures and violent crime associated with groups attempting to control this market.

f. (U) All forms of public transportation are generally safe at all times of the day; however, at night visitors should use common sense precautions so as to not become a target of opportunity.

g. (U) The traffic situation in Auckland can be difficult with a moderate amount of congestion. Visitors are advised that traffic drives on the left-hand side of the road. Visitors are advised that traffic accidents are common and that it is safe to pull over so that police may take an accident report. However, visitors who experience hostility or anti-American sentiment should depart the scene immediately and notify the RSO.

h. (U) Precautions should also be taken to not discuss sensitive or classified information outside secure environments or over unsecured and/or cellular telephones, and to securely safeguard classified or sensitive information at the Chancery and not at hotels or residences.

i. (U) Visitors should also be aware of the State Department's Consular Information sheet for New Zealand and the most recent Worldwide Caution Public Announcements, which are available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>

j. (U) In essence, visitors to New Zealand must exercise appropriate caution and be alert to their surroundings with regard to their personal security. Suspicious incidents/activities should be reported to RSO Wellington (Telephone (64)(4)462-6000, 24 hours/day).

COOK ISLANDS

19. (U) The Cook Islands is a Parliamentary democracy in free association with New Zealand, on which they rely for defense and assistance in meeting low-level security threats. The Embassy is not aware of any specific threats to U.S. facilities or personnel at this time in the Cook Islands. However, in light of the worldwide security alert all visitors should heighten their security awareness and report any unusual incidents to the Regional Security Office at the Embassy in Wellington, New Zealand.

10. (U) Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the November 2002 terrorist bombing in Bali, there has been concern that terrorists might seek to take advantage of the low level of security maintained in small island states such as the Cook Islands in order to target tourists in previously safe destinations. New Zealand has worked with the Cook Islands to improve airport security in response to this possibility. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, bombings, or kidnapping. Possible threats include conventional weapons such as explosive devices or non-conventional weapons, including chemical or biological agents. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets.

Targets may include facilities where Americans and other foreigners congregate or visit, such as residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events, resorts, and beaches. U.S. citizens should increase their security awareness at such locations, avoid them, or switch to other locations where Americans in large numbers generally do not congregate.

¶11. (U) The Cook Islands offshore finance industry has come under scrutiny regarding possible money laundering. The Cook Islands has been included on the OECD's list of non-cooperating states in the fight against money laundering.

¶12. (U) As a result of recent military action in Iraq, there is a potential for retaliatory actions to be taken against U.S. citizens and interest throughout the world. Public demonstrations carry the potential for precipitating violence directed at American citizens.

¶13. (U) U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert and some have drawn down their dependents and/or personnel. These facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time for security reasons. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to American citizens. Monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American Embassy or U.S. Consulate.

¶14. (U) Crime: Appropriate common sense precautions should be taken, especially at night, to avoid becoming a target of opportunity.

¶15. (U) Weather: Severe cyclones present a threat during the hurricane season, which is from November to March.

Swindells